

FROM THE CELL TO THE WORLD

deck thee with the pontifical vestments of a true Pope; I will clothe thee with Myself, so that thou wilt be in Me and I in thee, and thou shalt possess eternal glory."¹

The Queen, whose heart had been for a little moved by Birgitta's words, supplied her with means to return to Rome, which she reached at the beginning of Lent. Here the Count of Nola and the Abbot of Marmoutier came to her from the Pope, to ask for light, and, like the Pharisees of old, to demand a sign, -now that the renewal of hostilities between the Church and Bernabo Visconti seemed to raise a fresh obstacle to his return. In answer, early in July, Birgitta wrote her last letter to Alfonso, which he was to show to the Pope. Let Gregory do what lies in him for the honour of God, the salvation of souls, and the renovation of the Church, and he will have a sign of eternal consolation. But, if he does not come, he will have a sign of another kind, in the loss of things both temporal and spiritual, and in the remorse of his own conscience. As to the discord between the Pope and Bernabo, with such danger to innumerable souls, let the former come to terms. " For, even if the Pope were expelled from the popedom, it were better that he should humble himself and make peace on whatever occasion it could be done, rather than so many souls perish in eternal damnation." Let him trust in God alone, and, though all dissuade him from coming to Rome, and do all in their power to hinder him, none of them shall prevail over him. " Thus saith the Lord : Since the Pope doubts whether he should come to Rome for the establishment of peace and the reformation of My Church, I would have him come by all means in the coming autumn. And let him know that he can do nothing more pleasing to Me than coming to Italy." ²

A few days later, on July 23, 1373, Birgitta died. Her daughter Catherine took the body to Sweden, and then returned to Rome, to await the coming of the Pope that her mother had promised. Petrarca died in the following year. And, in the meanwhile, the other Catherine had taken up the work that the

¹ *Revelations*, IV. 141, 142.

² *Ibid.*, IV. 143.